

The limestone inquiry

Local conservation group

You are a member of a local conservation group, concerned about the effect of the quarry extension on the local environment. At the Inquiry you will have to present your arguments against the extension of the quarry.

You and the other representatives should first read this briefing. Then discuss the arguments you will put forward in a two-minute presentation at the Inquiry. You may want to elect a single person to speak, or share it between you.

The main points of your case

- Quarrying limestone permanently changes the landscape. This area was made a National Park in the 1950s because it has some of the most beautiful scenery in Britain. It should be kept beautiful and natural for everyone to enjoy.
- This National Park is visited by more people than any National Park in Europe
- Quarrying destroys the characteristic vegetation of the district and, more specifically, removes the habitat of wildlife.
- Along the northern and western boundaries of the existing site (including some of the proposed extension area), there is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated because of its biodiversity and in particular areas containing ash, wych-elm, rowan and whitebeam trees - species indicative of ancient woodland. There are also some important geological features in crags (a Regionally Important Geological Site - RIGS) near the top of the woodland which will be destroyed.
- If permission to extend the quarry is granted, you are very concerned that the quarry site should be properly restored after use. This means making sure the disused quarry blends in with the landscape. You are particularly concerned that the disused quarry should not be used as a waste tip. A restoration plan must be produced before quarrying starts. The operators should also show how they will prepare for restoration during the working life of the quarry. For example, the planting of appropriate types of trees to screen the site needs to be planned up to thirty years ahead.
- If permission is granted, you insist that the quarry faces should be much lower. Towards the end of the life of the quarry, the faces should be left so that they will weather to look like a natural cliff. Ledges and trees should be left which will give opportunities for colonisation by plants.